

concluded unscientifically that vultures, far from propagating viruses and bacteria in their saliva, gastric juice, or other body fluids, may have virustatic or bacteriostatic substances in these media that are consequences of Natural Selection through aeons of carrion-eating.

THE ROCKFELLER FOUNDATION,
BANGALORE, MYSORE,
April 10, 1952.

C. BROOKE WORTH

3. A RECORD OF THE CHEETAH (*ACINONYX JUBATUS* ERXLEBEN) IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT, MADRAS STATE

During the night of March 28/29, I had occasion to travel between this place and Bangalore, the route I use being via Renigunta, Tirupati, Chandragiri and Chittoor. Whilst passing through the hilly section of country, through which the road winds, between Chandragiri and Puthalkonda, at about 1.30 a.m., the headlights picked out the gleam of eyes and on drawing closer, we saw what we thought was a small leopard, sitting well erect on the left side of the road gazing toward the car. I slowed down immediately and when the car was some fifteen yards from the animal it stood up and walked across the brilliant beam of the headlights and, after standing on the right side of the road for some five to ten seconds looking at the now stationary car, it went down the embankment. Having no torch I could not either follow it or make any further observation; although I did turn the car across the road the light beam did not light up the ground below the embankment.

However, the cheetah gave us ample time to watch it as it liesurely walked across the road and stood on the right-hand side. The slender build, domed head and long limbs together with a very heavily spotted coat were too distinguishable to classify it as anything else, night or no night. The roadside was too loosely dusty to give a clear pug mark, but what pugs there were were smaller than one would expect of a leopard of corresponding size. By rule of thumb, I should judge the animal to have been some 5 feet in length, inclusive of the tail.

The country at the point of observation consists of a semi-cultivated valley, the crops being for the most part sugar-cane and orchards of mango, interspersed with the bush-covered flanks of the hills on either side. These hills are for the most part huge sheets of stone and tumbled masses of boulder and scree, in the fissured gullies of which there is a struggling growth of thorn bush and cactus. I have driven through this stretch at least a dozen times at all hours of the night and day within the past year and although I am told that Nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*) and 'Wild goats' (Muntjac?) occur together with wild pig I have not seen any signs of them along the road mentioned, although since I do know that these animals, together with Chital (*Axis axis*) occur along the very narrow belt of secondary jungle at the immediate foot of the most eastern range of the Eastern Ghats and that the animals within the Eastern Ghats

in Cuddapah have ample forest within which to move, it is very probable that the species mentioned do occur. However, by far the commonest animal throughout the area is the Blacknaped Hare (*Lepus nigricollis*), which occurs in profusion. I have gone into this at length as I am interested in placing a finger on a reliable source of food supply to attract carnivora, apart from the village herds of goats and cows, upon which they also may possibly prey.

This is the second occasion in my life that I have seen the Cheetah in its wild state, or more closely, the second time in some fifteen years of intelligent observation in the forests of Bihar, Orissa, Central India and Burma for the most part.

Regarding an animal such as this, which is fast becoming extinct in India, one is very reluctant to report the exact localities of occurrence out of fear of those trigger-happy gentlemen who do not understand the fine line between sport and slaughter. However, I think the Chandragiri Cheetah will be safe as the local population is not given so much to shikar.

c/o POSTMASTER,
P.O. GUDUR, NELLORE DIST.,
April 11, 1952.

K. M. KIRKPATRICK

4. THE 'DIPPING' HABIT OF THE TAPIR (*TAPIRUS INDICUS* CUV.)

Blanford's Fauna (p. 479) states that the tapir is fond of water, and is said to plunge in and walk along the bottom, instead of swimming. There appears to be little further information on record, and it might be interesting to draw attention to a note included in 'The Story of a Tapir' by J. A. Hislop in the *Malayan Nature Journal*, Vol. V, No. 2, June 1950 (pages 92 to 95) in which he relates the experience of a Mr. C. E. Jackson:—

'While discussing the tapir with some Sakai I remarked that I could not understand how this animal managed to survive and flourish . . . particularly against tigers. The Sakai replied that the senses of sight, hearing and smell were most acutely developed in the tapir, and that it also had the ability to remain under water for fairly long periods. In fact, when harassed by a tiger, tapirs had been known to enter a river and walk downstream on the bed of the river for a considerable distance in order to put the tiger off the scent. I was not aware of the tapir possessing all these powers attributed to it and was very sceptical about its sub-aqueous abilities. It was, however, not very long after this conversation took place that the following incident occurred.'

He then goes on to relate how he received an urgent telephone call from the Assistant Engineer, Waterworks, Kuala Lumpur, informing him that a tiger had attacked a tapir at the Ampang Reservoir and that both animals had fallen into the 'intake well'. Mr. Jackson visited the place with Mr. H. M. Pendlebury of the Museums Department.